[English]

Afforestation

3732. DR. PRABIN CHANDRA SARMA : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether a sizeable portion of the forest reserve land in the country has been illegally encroached upon;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise; and

(c) the steps taken/being taken to vacate these encroachments?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) : (a) to (c) Some portion of the forest reserve land has been encroached upon by people. The details regarding encroachments on forest land are maintained in the States/ Union territories concerned, at divisional level. Government of India has taken following measures to prevent encroachment of forest land :

(i) National Forest Policy, 1988 states that encroachment of forest land has been on the increase and this trend has to be arrested and effective action taken to prevent its continuance.

(ii) The Forest Policy also stipulates that people's participation in management of the forests should be encouraged.

(iii) Under the Indian Forest Act, 1927 and Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, encroachment of forest land has been declared an offence.

(iv) State Governments carry out eviction of encroachments alongwith Revenue authorities.

[Translation]

Terror by Wild Cats

3733. SHRI JAGATVIR SINGH DRONA : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of the terror created by the wild cats in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh recently;

(b) if so, the number of persons who became victims thereof; and

(c) the action being taken by the Government to deal with the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) and (b) According to the State Govt. of Uttar Pradesh, no such incident has been reported.

(c) Does not arise.

Workshop on Forests

3734. SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS :
SHRI SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI :

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether a National workshop was held recently which was attended by the forest officers and some leading NGOs;

(b) if so, whether the participants have requested/ suggested to strike balance between the conservation of forest and traditional rights of communities in the draft forest bill;

(c) if so, the details of suggestions made in the workshop; and

(d) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Suggestions to strike a balance between conservation of forests and traditional rights of the communities were made by some of the participants.

(c) Main recommendations are as under:

— There should be a legal definition of "forests".

— The amended Act should consolidate all Central and State forest laws.

— Joint Forest Management rules should be incorporated in the new Act.

— Problems of local people living in and around forests should be considered as an important factor in reserving/notifying or dereserving/ denotifying a forest area.

— There should be a time limit for settlement of rights and it should be on the basis of carrying capacity of the forest area.

— Proposals for dereservation/denotification to be cleared by a statutory committee comprising of government and non-government members.